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YORKSHIRE UFO SOCIETY

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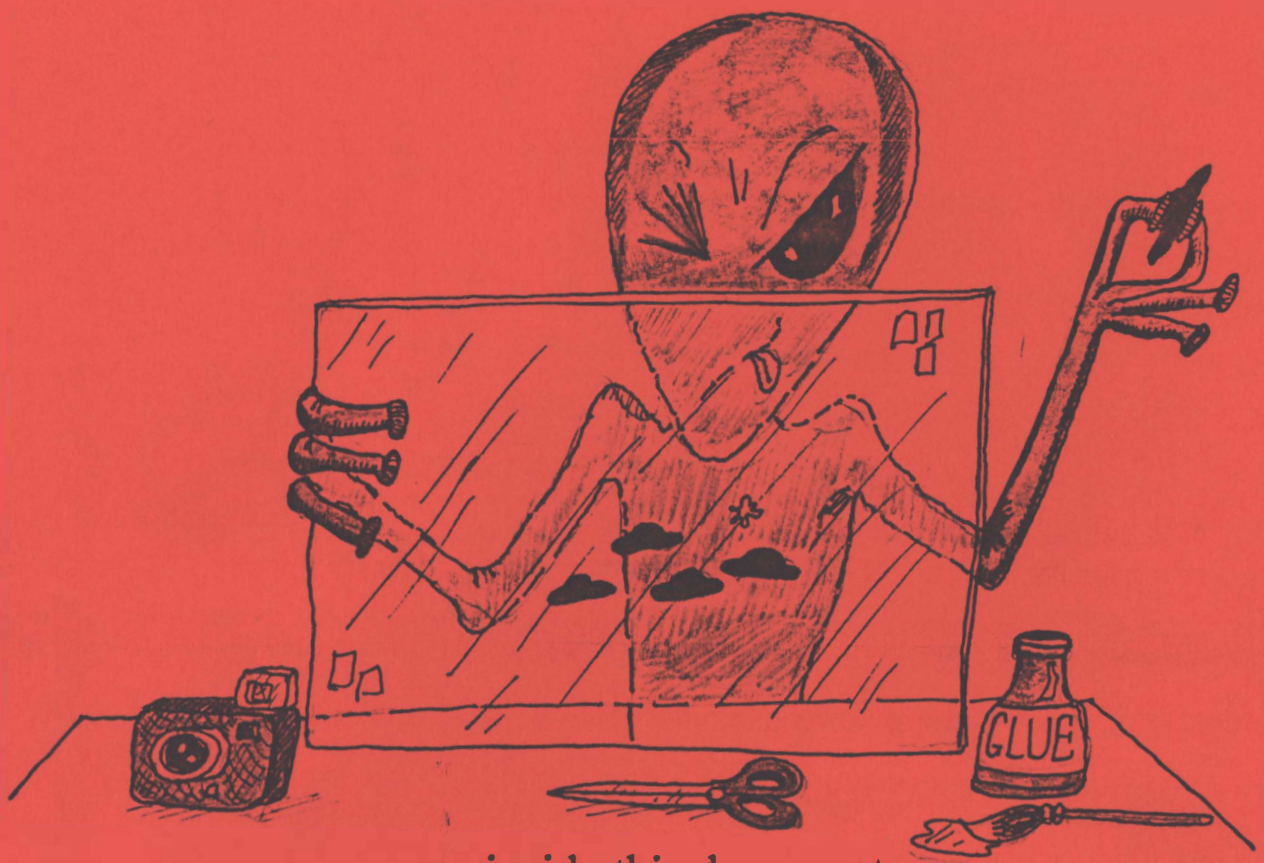

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THE NEW BRITISH ROSWELL?

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Vol 5 # 7, January 2002)

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Project Red Book *is published by the Yorkshire UFO Society.*

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"Will there ever be a boy born, who can swim faster than a shark?"

NO KIDDING THIS TIME...MY FLYING SAUCER PHOTO *IS* GENUINE! (Part 2)

UFO photographic hoaxes and the story of Alex Birch and Stephen Darbishire

DAVID CLARKE & ANDY ROBERTS

THE ALEX BIRCH PHOTOGRAPH

"...There is no doubt that the photographs are completely authentic. It is inconceivable that the youngster or parent could have perpetrated a hoax."

Leonard Cramp, on the Birch photos in *Flying Saucer Review*. (26)

In 1962 Alex Birch was one year older than Stephen Darbishire had been when he took the photographs that changed his life. His single black and white picture has since entered the UFO mythology as one of the best-known photographic hoaxes – or was it? Alex's family were considerably less financially well-off than the Darbishire's; the Birch parents lived in a modest house at Mosborough, at that time in Derbyshire but actually on the outskirts of the industrial Yorkshire city of Sheffield. Like Stephen Darbishire, Alex had a Catholic upbringing and it is clear that his parents Margaret and Alex senior had an open mind on subjects such as spiritualism and flying saucers.

Alex also had the backing of additional witnesses who initially pledged to stick by the story through thick and thin. They were Alex's schoolpal David Brownlow aged 12 and an older friend, Stuart Dixon, then 16 years of age. The instrument of UFOlogical alchemy was a one-year-old box Brownie 127 camera which Alex continues to treasure, despite a recent bid from the Roswell Museum in New Mexico, who wanted to turn it into one of their exhibits.(27)

It was a grey Sunday morning in March and the trio were fooling around in a field near the British Oak pub five miles from Sheffield City Centre. Today the pub is surrounded not by trees but by modern housing developments. In uncannily similar circumstances to those described by Stephen Darbishire, Alex was taking experimental pictures with his new camera – snaps of a dog, of Stuart jumping into the air, of a stone being thrown and then, lo and behold... a formation of flying saucers! Five in all, hanging in the air, with dazzling white blobs emerging from their dark saucer-shaped fuselages. "I got my camera up and took a shot of them," Alex told the *Derbyshire Times*. "A second or so later they disappeared at terrific speed towards Sheffield." (28)

Alex soon became the centre of a whirlwind of publicity. His photo appeared first in the Yorkshire newspapers, then in the nationals during the summer of 1962, whilst the part played by the other two boys faded into the background. Alex's father and his English teacher Colin Brook, both sympathetic to ET visitations, played a similar role to Dr Darbishire, promoting the pictures and playing heavily upon the naivety and natural honesty of young Alex. His father in particular played a major part in the promotion of the picture to newspapers and UFO societies. In a letter to *Flying Saucer Review* published in 1963, Birch senior wrote: "...I myself was a non-believer in these objects...[but now] I am firmly convinced that we are being visited by flying saucers of other planets." (29)

Within months 14-year-old Alex was retracing the steps of his Cumbrian predecessor, visiting London to address the inaugeral meeting of the British UFO Research Association in Kensington on September 22, 1962. A contemporary account of the meeting described hoe the schoolboy addressed a crowd of more than 200 members of UFO societies from across the country "...he seemed dwarfed by the speaker's stand as he spoke faultlessly for four minutes." (30) BUFORA enthusiastically endorsed his pictures following an analysis conducted by one of their 'experts', Alan Watts. He concluded his report with the comment: "If we want the truth I would say we couldn't do better than take these to be fairly normal Adamski-type saucers and argue it out from there." (31) The editor of *Flying Saucer Review*, Waveney Girvan went further suggesting the saucer pilots were

interested in Sheffield because "if there is life of any sort inside these flying objects it presumably needs water to sustain it...and Sheffield is surrounded by reservoirs." (32) Predictably, the publicity that Alex's photo received sparked a major flap in the Sheffield and Yorkshire region during the autumn of 1962 with dozens of others 'seeing' UFOs above the city. (33)

But the real highlight of the year was Alex's visit to the very seat of power – Whitehall. Official interest was encouraged by Alex's father who took it upon himself to contact the Air Ministry in July 1962. He informed them of the existence of his son's photograph and said he was "awaiting instructions." (34) After declining to make a field investigation, the Air Ministry slowly and reluctantly agreed to take a look at Alex's photo in the face of mounting publicity. Alex and father subsequently paid a visit to Whitehall in a trip sponsored by a newspaper, the *Yorkshire Post*. When the group arrived at the Ministry building the journalist was carefully separated from the Birch family and taken to visit the Public Relations office. Meanwhile, Alex was questioned by the two senior RAF officers whose job it was in 1962 to monitor UFO reports. These were Flight Lieutenant R.H. White of S6 – a predecessor of Nick Pope's Secretariat (Air Staff) 2A – and a "technical consultant", Flight Lieutenant Anthony Bardsley of the more shadowy Air Intelligence department DDI (Tech). An internal MoD account described the atmosphere at the meeting as "cordial [and] both Mr Birch and his son were prepared to talk about it [the photograph] at length." (35)

Mr Birch senior seemingly had another agenda. In *Flying Saucer Review* he claimed his son was "sick with fear" when the interview began and said the officials "started what I will call a brainwash...asking him wasn't it any reflection that he saw and what was the weather like, what were the formations of cloud...the questions they must have repeated at least thirty times..." (36) In the re-telling the length of the interview at Whitehall increased from two hours to three (in FSR) and then to seven hours when recalled by Alex in 1998. He remembered walking up the steps of Whitehall with his father where the pair "met a man in a tweed jacket, flannels and a Dickie bow. We went down long corridors into a room where there were some men and a doctor. They took the negative and the camera and kept them overnight, taking the camera apart. They asked me all these questions for so long I got muddled, telling me they were not flying saucers but Russians." (37)

Reading the Air Ministry file on the Birch case, preserved at the Public Record Office, it becomes clear that White and Bardsley did not believe the boy's story but could not say so publicly. In an internal memo dated September 24, 1962, released in 1993 under the "30 year rule," Bardsley writes to a colleague in S6: "...it is a relatively simple task to reproduce an identical photograph to the one we were shown...*the sequence of exposures on the two strips of negatives we saw do not exactly fit the boy's story*. [my emphasis]" Bardsley summed up his exasperation: "...perhaps this brief outline of these doubts will assist you in deciding what on earth you can write to Mr Birch." (38)

After much deliberation, S6 decided on a classic fudge. In a letter sent to Mr Birch senior, and subsequently released by the family to the Press, the Ministry suggested the objects shown in the photograph were "ice particles in the atmosphere" an explanation that was rejected by just about everyone including the editor of *Flying Saucer Review*, Charles Bowen, who questioned whether the Air Ministry really believed their own explanation, which of course they didn't! To many observers, including Alex Birch senior, the Air Ministry statement simply confirmed their belief in an official cover-up. Birch claimed it was this statement that actually led him to believe flying saucers were extaterrestrial "and what is more, the Air Ministry knows also but won't admit it." (39)

Alex Birch had his brief moment of fame, and by 1972 the bubble had burst. By that time he had moved home several times but was still pursued by people he describes as "nutcases" and their endless questions about the saucers. Newly married with his first child on the way, continual ridicule led him to phone the *Daily Express* and admit the 'flying saucers' were simply cut out shapes pasted on a sheet of glass and re-photographed. According to his story, his father only learned the truth the day before the newspapers carried the story and begged him not to go ahead with the plan. The *Sheffield Telegraph* quickly tracked down another of the trio, David Brownlow, who confirmed the whole thing was a joke which snowballed.(40) And there it stood until 1998 when, in the midst of short-lived UFO revival that accompanied the popular TV series *The X-Files*, Alex – now in his mid-50s and a successful antiques dealer - courted publicity

once again. This time his story followed a familiar route taken by Stephen Darbishire as a result of his 1959 'confession'; it was the hoax that was in itself a hoax - the photograph was genuine after all!

"I did become internationally famous but I also faced a lot of ridicule and pressure," Birch told Pete Moxon of Sheffield-based White's Newsagency. "I decided to claim that it was a fake in hope that it would all go away and the pressure would be taken off me. But it didn't work out like that...the UFO fraternity didn't believe me, and they even called a conference in London and came to the conclusion that my change of story was due to pressure [from the Government]." (41)

Why had Alex waited until 1998 to tell the whole truth? "The reason I've decided to let the real story be known now is because I think it is important that the public should know." Unfortunately, Alex's two former schoolpals didn't see it that way. David Brownlow and Stuart Dixon were still resident in Mosborough and both were contacted by the *Sheffield Star* before Alex was able to speak directly to them. Both men independently dismissed Alex's new claim, although Stuart Dixon was later to retract his original statement but only *after* meeting his old friend for the first time since 1962.

Brownlow, however, was having none of it. "It was a hoax," he told us. "Alex has always run with it more than we have. It was painted on glass. We were just messing around in Alex's dad's greenhouse when we had the idea to do it. We were all into *Quatermass* and *War of the Worlds* at the time. It was Alex's idea to take the photo but then his dad and a teacher at the school got hold of it and we all got swept along with the hoax which just snowballed. It was an incredible experience and we had our ten minutes of fame, but I just want to forget about it now." (42)

The most recent, and amusing, revival of the Alex Birch saga came via the pages of *Flying Saucer Review*. When, in the closing year of the 20th century, Birch's latest claims reached the grand old man of British UFOlogy, Gordon Creighton could not conceal his delight. The Birch photograph, Creighton assured the dwindling band of FSR subscribers, long dismissed as a schoolboy prank *was* genuine after all. It had been examined by none other than Kodak, who had pronounced it genuine and it was known also that the British Air Ministry and the Pentagon had received copies of the print "and conducted their own enquiries." (43) Not only that, when Birch and his father visited the Air Ministry "the main preoccupation of the officials was to get both of them bundled rapidly out of London and back to Yorkshire before the journalists could discover their presence in the city." In making this statement, he overlooked the fact that Alex's visit to London had been made possible by the Birch's own newspaper, the *Yorkshire Post*, a fact reported in FSR at that time!

Creighton's obsession with the British Monarchy and his belief that they hold 'secret knowledge' of Extraterrestrials denied to the public was woven into this latest twist in the tale. "Although I have no *proof* of this," he wrote. "It seems pretty likely that Birch senior and his son were also invited to visit Buckingham Palace to discuss their case either with the Duke of Edinburgh himself or with his equerry." (44)

Alex's 1972 confession, Creighton added, had "little if any effect" upon what he called "the serious UFO research fraternity" but it clearly impressed FSR's then editor, Charles Bowen. The implication was that it was not as easy to 'pull the wool over' the eyes of the current editor. Large amounts of energy and money had been put into campaign to ridicule and denigrate witnesses such as Alex who had produced "dangerous photographs" and as a result were coerced or forced to put out "confessions."

FSR's editor could not resist the opportunity to pull out the ace from his sleeve, a case which supported his claims about the Birch photos in every respect. "Much has been done to try to destroy the authenticity of the other famous schoolboy photo, the Darbyshire [sic] one of 1954," wrote Creighton. "But so far as we know, never without any success, and Stephen Darbyshire [sic] never issued a 'confession' and still asserts that his photo was totally authentic." (45)

Like the saucers themselves the stories never stop spinning. For every person who 'believes' that Birch and Darbishire captured 'structured objects of unknown origin' on film you can easily find an equal and opposite sceptical view that both photographs were simple hoaxes. In between there is every shade of belief and tortuous justification such as this example from the *LUFORO Bulletin* of July 1962. Using the logic of the believer the writer suggests that:

"on a cloudy day in February 1954, one of these objects sought out Stephen Darbishire who had a camera with him, and that in February 1962, on a cloudy day (giving cover) a group sought out Alex Birch who had a camera with him. This is a relationship of a group of relationships and is evidence for the following possibility: after the disbelief that greeted Adamski, how logical of these space visitors to give evidence of their actuality to boys of an age not to be considered quite knowledgeable enough to have fabricated evidence, yet old enough to be recipients of it. Both Stephen Darbishire, at the time, and Alex Birch had the intelligent presence of mind to point the camera, click the shutter, and move on the film. How many adults would have done so well; were these boys selected?" (46)

Join the dots time. From Adamski to Darbishire to Birch, the saucer neatly squared in just a few words. 'Objects' without objectivity, unexplained photographs as evidence of 'space visitors', schoolchildren promoted as unconscious harbingers of the invaders. Neither Birch nor Darbishire are teenagers any longer and they can't escape from the monsters they helped create. Birch chose to follow his calling throughout his adult life whilst Darbishire retreated as quickly as possible from his creation. Like many others in the UFO cottage industry Alex Birch launched his own website, www.ufo-images.ndirect-co.uk. Yet in the same mercurial fashion as Birch's sighting, the web site was there one day gone the next. However, its' existence and content gave further clues as to just how deeply Birch's 'UFO' photograph had affected his life and maybe some clues towards his original motivation. On his "fantastic site for UFO buffs and everyone else," the web surfer could read about the Birch sighting, see and order copies of the photograph and purchase copies of the Air Ministry report. The experiences of the father have now been passed down to his son, Adrian, who advertises quality hand-crafted wooden models of classic UFOs, based upon those reported by 1950s contactees George Adamski and Howard Menger. It was an uncritical site, designed to market the case and to inform people about the sightings and how Alex saw mankind in the cosmic scheme of things. Echoing the apocalyptic fears expressed by many UFO witnesses and contactees, Birch wrote: "Perhaps we are in the infancy of our species. We peer into the Dark, fearing it, yet seeking within it a reassurance that we are not alone. Perhaps in the black void are beings not unlike us, but maybe wiser, better, who will tell us secrets that will save Us from Ourselves."

Perhaps. But whether Birch's 'dark', his 'black void', refers to deep space or the deeper spaces of the human mind is open to conjecture. As Diane Purkiss writes in her history of fairies and fairy stories, "The human mind cannot bear very much blankness.....where we do not know, we invent and what we invent reflects our fears of what we do not know." (47) Birch's evocations from the dark have remained with him since that day in 1962 and now form a mainstay of his world view. Like his UFOs, over the past 39 years he has flickered in and out of the public eye trying to make sense of nonsense, trying to get us to see it his way.

Stephen Darbishire, child artist extraordinary, is now a sought after artist, living in remote rural seclusion. Our afternoon spent with him was more an exercise in semantics and verbal strategy than witness interview, as the quotes in this article demonstrate. He said he didn't really want to talk about his experience, but evidently couldn't bear not to. Darbishire had , by his own agency, been to the heart of the ufological labyrinth and returned safely, able to relax in his farm house kitchen and play games with the past. He was luckier than most. He knew that we knew that he knew. But none of us could say it outright. Birch, on the other hand, was more evangelical, still trapped, still justifying, pleased to pose with the original camera and prints.

In 2001 the problems surrounding Birch's photograph are no more resolved that in 1962. Indeed, the case is more complicated not least because of Alex's claims of a lifetime of paranormal phenomena, experiences shared to some degree by his wife, children and other independent witnesses. (48) If the photo is a fake, then is Alex lying about these experiences too? If so are his family also lying? Why would anyone create such a web of deceit around themselves for no discernable reason? Yet what are the alternatives? Questions tumble over themselves in desperation to be asked, but any answers merely beg further questions. Only blind acceptance or outright accusation seem to offer any relief from the tension they created through the cameras lens.
Maybe it's all as true as both Birch and Darbishire originally claimed, and five strange light emitting objects and one translucent domed Adamaski craft were really, objectively

there in the physical sense, visible to the naked eye, trapped on film.

What then? We are still no nearer to divining what either boys actually caught on film. Or maybe – and this is certainly our belief, borne out by the interviews and evidence available – the photographs were both faked. But does that reduce them to mindless schoolboy pranks which got out of hand, or must we look deeper and acknowledge they were the outward expressions of Alex's saucer-haunted life and Darbishire's immense artistic and creative talents. These two photographs have taken on lives of their own, shaping the lives and beliefs of many UFO buffs, leading individuals further into the saucerous labyrinth which is UFOlogy.

The parallels with the Cottingley fairy photographs are almost too obvious to mention. Again children – two cousins - were involved and again their stories were accepted by adults who *wanted* to believe. The two girls corroborated each other's story and once it had become an article of faith, they found it impossible to confront the 'truth.' In the Cottingley case it was only 60 years after the event when one of the girls, by then in her 80s, was confronted with undeniable evidence, finally admitted the they had faked the photographs. Even then, the other cousin swore that although most of the fairy photographs were hoaxes they were produced to prove to others the reality of the beings seen at Cottingley Beck. One of the group of pictures, she maintained, did show *real* fairies! (49) The Peter Pan nature of childhood can convince us that our beliefs are as objectively real as the world of grown-ups. Or more importantly that they *should* be real enough for the adult world to see. So why not a little photographic alchemy to help things along, create a 'reality' of vicarious experience.

Consider also the role of svengali like figures in at least one of the cases we have considered.

Whilst the Cottingley Fairies led Conan Doyle, hard-headed contriver of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries, up the garden path, Stephen Darbishire had Desmond Leslie. Leslie comes across as a trickster figure manipulating both witnesses and the subject itself, making random links between unconnected sightings.

Ultimately, no one knows the truth behind the Birch and Darbishire photographs but themselves. And, as we've shown they are no longer in charge of their own teenage narratives, having had them taken away by the adult world of the media and ufology, cut up and fed back to them so many times that their experiences are no longer their own.

The original negatives are long gone and both Alex and Stephen have, by their own admission, intentionally blurred the line between reality and fantasy, asking, at various times for both, to be accepted as the truth. As investigators in these cases we find ourselves caught up in the dilemma that anything we write will also affect what others choose to believe, but won't change what happened – and is still happening- to either Birch or Darbishire.

So, be warned. If your children claim to have photographed UFOs or any other mythical phenomena at the bottom of the garden, or if like Moses they return from the mountains bearing emulsion coated saucer scrolls their lives, and possibly yours, will never be the same again.

We prefer leave the last word to one of the three witnesses to the Birch case, Stuart Dixon, who said in 1999: "I find it far better and simpler to let people think what they want to about that photo. I don't care anymore"

Acknowledgements: The authors wish to thank Stephen Darbishire, Alex Birch, David Brownlow and Stuart Dixon for granting interviews. Thank you also to Nick Redfern for copies of the PRO file on Alex Birch and Peter Hough for allowing access to the tape recording of his 1993 interview with Darbishire, conducted with Dr Harry Hudson. We wish to make it clear that the views expressed in this article are not shared by Hough or Hudson.

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32) "Flying Saucers: The evidence runs on straight lines," by Waveney Girvan, *Sheffield Telegraph Weekend Magazine*, 1 September 1962

33) See Clarke, Randles & Roberts, *The UFOs that Never Were*. London: London House, 2000, p 129-30

34) PRO Air 2/16918, letter from A. Birch (senior) to Air Ministry, 2 July 1962

35) PRO Air 2/16918

36) Interview with Alex Birch, 6 November 1998

37) PRO Air 2/16918

38) *FSR* Vol 9/2, 7

39) *Sheffield Telegraph*, 6 October 1972

40) *Yorkshire Post* (Leeds), 5 March 1999

41) Interview with David Brownlow, 3 December 1998

42) File 7824 Project Blue Book, National Archives, Washington D.C. contains a b/w print of the Birch photo and brief details of the 1962 sighting. The conclusion reads: "Insuffienct data for evaluation. Negatives not with prints. No request made for photo analysis." The Birch photo was also reproduced in an article by CIA Chief Historian Gerald Haines "A Die Hard Issue: The CIA —" *Studies in Intelligence*, 1997.

43) *Flying Saucer Review* vol 45/2 (summer 2000), 9-11

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48) Interview with Stuart Dixon, 6 April 1999

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NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 12th February,2002

7:00pm – 10:00pm

THE MOSELEY'S ARMS

West Bar,

Sheffield City Centre

UFOS AND THE NOSS [NAVAL OCEAN SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM] PROBLEM

BY ANTHONY ECCLES (MARA)
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Anthony Eccles is an Assistant Curator of Ethnology at Liverpool Museum. In his spare time he is the Co-Founder and co-ordinator for the Merseyside Anomalies Research Association (MARA) and an active member of BUFORA (British UFO Research Association).

On Thursday 29th June *The Guardian* newspaper presented a feature on sun storm satellites.(1) The European Space Agency is about to launch Cluster, a set of four satellites that are designed to orbit the sun in a tight formation. In 1996, the test flight launcher 'Ariane V,' which carried the first Cluster payload, blew up. In that same year a Canadian newspaper reports that observers of the Perseid meteor shower were surprised to see a triangular formation of three lights above them in the sky. For the first time people were becoming aware that satellites travelling in formation were in existence.

The case that follows has, over recent months, brought to light a number of important points to my attention. Thanks to *Strange Daze*, I have been able to update this investigative article into artificial satellite systems which continues to be responsible for a large number of UFO sightings.

Two things comes to light from this case; firstly, that many ufologists fail to identify reported UFO sightings probably due to deep cultural belief systems, and secondly, that the security of the United States is continuously being threatened by the technological development of other countries. I shall explain more about the latter point later on, but first of all I would like to start at the beginning and explain how I have come to the above conclusions.

During October of 1999, a UFO case had come to my attention from the Thingwall area of Wirral on Merseyside. A fifty five year old sales engineer called John was walking his dog in the fields on the Tuesday night of the 5th of October. John and his dog were located to the north of Prenton Brook, and to the east of far Lower Thingwall Lane.

It was ten o'clock at night and the sky was slightly covered with cloud, it was not raining and there was no wind. In fact, John could see a clear night sky. A slow moving point of light had caught his attention, and it appeared to pass through the constellation of Cassiopeia.

The man believed that what he was looking at was a satellite. However, another detail had caught his eye, he noticed a second light and then a third appearing together to form a triangular formation, with one light being the lead light and the others forming a base line, an isosceles triangle formation. All three lights were moving together simultaneously.

Satellites? Moving in formation? His initial thought was that he was observing three individual objects and not three lights that were fixed onto a single solid body. They appeared to move at the correct speed for a satellite and at the correct height. The lights disappeared from view "as they entered the Earth's shadow".

Normally, most investigators, like myself, would probably connect the sighting of triangular lights with suspect prototype military aircraft. However, because the witness had submitted a number of important observational details on his sighting form, I was able to focus the investigation on astronomical phenomena.

My first point of call was my computer skymap and reference books of the Merseyside night skies, which are published by the Liverpool Astronomical Society. With this in hand I was able to locate Cassiopeia. From John's description of the lights the witness had observed them travelling from the west to the east.

I had never heard of satellites travelling in formation before so my next move was to contact the British Astronomical Association - Artificial Satellite Section, and also to look on the Internet for a satellite tracking site called Heavens-Above.Com, which is based in Germany. From this website I was able to

pinpoint a satellite called Cosmos 1943 rocket which was close to the estimated object altitude and location.

It is a single object which passes at 22:03:05 at a magnitude of 3.9 and first appears in the south west. This object fails to account for the lights witnessed, firstly because it produces a singular light in the sky, secondly because it appears below Cassiopeia and not through it, and finally because it moves in the opposite direction, from the south west to the north east.

Not the right solution, I know, but I was certain I was on the right track. Soon after, on the 25th October 1999, I received an email from the British Astrronomical Association with an explanation that it could well be NOSS. The email carried with it the following information:

"A couple of summers ago, meteor observers certainly became familiar with the 'NOSS Trio' of satellites, which were in an equilateral pattern. Onboard sensors apparently allowed researchers to measure precise distances between these, and how they were affected by gravitational pertubations over time. The NOSS satellites were also comparatively faint - visual mag. +3 or thereabouts."

Searching carefully on the Internet I discovered a piece that had been written by CNI News, it was continuing a story that had appeared on the 1st September 1996 in the *Toronto Star* newspaper regarding the annual Perseid meteor shower. During the nights of the 8th, 9th and 10th of August of that year a set of three "unblinking" lights in triangular formation had "cruised across the star fields."

These lights had never been seen before and were described as being fainter than the constellation of Ursa Major. The article goes on to say that Ted Molczan, a satellite orbit expert based in Toronto had figured out what the three lights were...they were NOSS, and there was not just one set but there were actually three sets of satellites travelling in formation. They were code named Parcae, after the three daughters of Zeus, and were a part of the US Navy's spaceborne electronic intelligence system (ELINT). NOSS was the name given to these satellites by non military satellite specialists and stood for Naval Ocean Surveillance System. Until 1996, the US Government had denied all knowledge of these satellites ever existing.

Each group of satellites, apparently, fly at an altitude of 1100km and in formation approximately 100km across. The satellites are meant to track the position, speed, and direction of all military ships at sea. This is done by detecting communication, navigation and weapons control signals that are emitted almost continuously by naval ships. Three satellites can track these ships more accurately than a singular satellite could by measuring the time difference of signal receipt.

According to this CNI News article three sets of satellites were launched in 1990, 1991 and 1996. Each satellite measures approximately three meters in length, larger than the earlier versions of this system.(2)

This sounded fascinating to me because it indicated that any ship belonging to any nationality could be identified and located anywhere in the world. It has some interesting implications with the use of satellite technology. Furthermore I was surprised that I had not come across these in the UFO literature as an explanation for some UFO reports. I conducted a further search and found a number of question and answer pages from satellite enthusiasts. They inquire as to whether these satellites can remain in tight formation and ask how they can manoeuvre in orbit. These satellites move with a leading satellite first and the remaining two following behind, they are not capable of remaining in a tight formation but will appear in a triangular formation as well as a formation of lights ravelling in a straight line. This actually ties in with a couple of other UFO cases that I have which fit just that description. One of the answers given by a satellite observer stated the following;

"The NOSS constellations consist of three visible satellites, each of which moves in a roughly geocentric orbit. The shape of the triangle formed cannot be maintained because the orbits must intersect one another when viewed from Earthis center. Thus from time to time the satellites will even appear to be in a straight line from that point of view. All other times they form some sort of triangle, but its shape must vary continuously. I tried viewing them from above in simulation in Starry Night.

It is possible to do so, but it is very difficult."(3)

Out of curiosity I wanted to know a bit more and fortunately found a few pages from FAS, Space Policy Agency: Military Space Programs. From here were pages which

described White Cloud (NOSS). Its opening sentence begins:

"The White Cloud Naval Ocean Surveillance System (NOSS) performed wide area ocean surveillance, primarily for the Navy White Cloud which is used to determine the location of radio and radars transmissions using triangulation. The identity of naval units can be deduced by analysis of the operating frequencies and transmission patterns of the emitters.

Each NOSS launch placed a cluster of one primary satellite and three smaller sub-satellites (that trail along at distances of several hundred kilometers) into low polar orbit. This satellite array can determine the location of radio and radars transmitters, using triangulation, and the identity of naval units, by analysis of the operating frequencies and transmission patterns.

NOSS used the ELINT (Electronic Intelligence) technique called "time difference of arrival", TDOA, rather than true interferometry. Conceptually, TDOA and interferometry are very similar, though distinct, techniques. They may also use the frequency-domain version of TDOA, FDOA, which exploits Doppler shifts somewhat in the way the COSPAS/SARSATs do."

The initial phase of Operation White Cloud was reported to be in operation from 1976 right through to 1987 when 9 satellites were sent into orbit. This phase used one main and three sub-satellites and used Atlas F rockets to project them into orbit. It is not explained how these satellites remained in formation flight, it is suggested that extremely long wires held them together but that these would have had to have been several hundreds of kilometers long! From 1983 to 1987 a total of five groups of modernized SSU-1A satellites with upgraded stabilization and data transmission systems were launched to replace failed satellites. By 1990, these satellites were launched using only three bodies. A number of infrared sensors were incorporated into these, and these had been manufactured by a company called Martin Marietta. By 1996 these satellites were using a stronger and more reliable Titan 4#17 rockets.(4) (NOSS satellites are really known collectively as Space-Based Wide Area Surveillance System - a joint US Navy and Air Force program.)

There is a paper given by a Russian military advisor called Major A. Andronov entitled "The U.S. Navy's 'White Cloud' Spaceborne ELINT System." This gives an excellent explanation as to why three satellites are used.

The first has a wide observation swath, but by itself cannot determine the co-ordinates of radio emitters. The second satellite, with thefirst, gets a fix on the shipborne emitters, the position of the ship is obtained, but with some ambiguity. The third body gets the fix of the emittersí signals, enables their co-ordinates to be determined precisely and then transmits the information to Navy ships for weapons employment. You can therefore take out an enemy surface craft long before it appears on Radar.(5) The targeted information is not only relayed to US Navy ships but also to land stations such as Blossom Point in Maryland, Winter Harbor in Maine, Edsel in Scotland, and smaller stations in the Pacific such as Guam and Adak ,(6) which were receiver stations before they were closed down.(7)

Major Andronov states that a satellite group is able to receive signals from a zone with a radius of about 3500km on the surface of the Earth, and under clear conditions can monitor the same object 108 minutes later. A system of four satellite groups enables any region at a latitude of 40 to 60 degrees to be monitored more than 30 times a day. This spaced based ELINT system is one of the basic means for over-the-horizon targeting for warships equipped with Tomahawk cruise missiles. Today, these information receiver systems are employed by nuclear submarines.(8)

Recently, I came across a feature on page 34 of *UFO Magazine (UK)* regarding one man's observation of such satellites.(9) At the close of his writing he asks "Do satellites orbit in symmetrical formation, perhaps?" This is followed by a very small entry at the bottom of the page which states that "James Oberg claims that three top secret DoD satellites are orbiting the Earth in triangular formation". There did not appear to be any research done by the magazine to support or correct this statement, in fact nothing further had been reported since then. A colleague of mine, Bill Bimson, had contacted UFO Magazine with the contents of the article you are reading now.

Their reply was that NOSS satellites could not account for the witness's initial sighting back in 1975, and according to my own notes NOSS was first launched in 1976. Could this be right? I began to scour the Internet for more information.

What I then discovered answered my question. Was it possible that formation satellites could have been launched, tried and tested at an earlier date. According to a reliable source the first launch of ELINT Naval reconnaissance satellites code named Parcae took place at Vandenberg Launch Site(10) 14 December 197 and were launched using an LT Thor Agena D rocket.(11) What I realized was that there were different ELINT systems that were being used by the US Air Force and US Navy. Remember that NOSS is only a civilian term for the satellites, their name, type and operational function will vary so there will be a number of dates for their initial launches. To further confuse interested parties rocket launches designated as NOSS were a cover for other military satellites.

Over the years through the 1980s and 90s the satellites were launched on powerful rockets from the Atlas F, Atlas H and the Titan 4. These were designed to carry a payload of several satellites which would be individually deployed in Low Earth Orbit (using Altitude Control Electronics or ACE), this would not only be cheaper but also a more effective way of deploying satellites. However, there do appear to be a number of discrepancies, normally the rocket being used as a launcher would determine the type of satellite being sent up. If we look at the weight being carried by the launchers today we know that they can carry a payload of 8 tonnes in orbit, but the SB-Wass (NOSS) satellites weigh a total of 1.5 tonnes, what we do not know is what other type of equipment is contained within the rocket payload. The extra mass appears to be consistent with the presence of advanced scanning infra-red sensor on the sub-satellites.(12) Another example of existing misinformation involves the Titan 2 and Titan 4 booster rockets that were used in 1988, 1989 and 1992 which had a payload similar to NOSS but were in fact, as stated previously, singular spacecraft. These were deployed at a higher orbit around the Earth to function for Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) instead of Electronic Intelligence (ELINT).

For the Twenty First century satellites will be of a smaller construction, produced economically and will encompass tasks such as space based radar that the present Discoverer II programn (joint US Air Force, DARPA and NRO technology) is tasked to do will cost an estimated $60 million. Discoverer IIis goal will be to launch two research and development satellites which will be capable of detecting and tracking targets on the Earthis surface! (Did you know that the NAVSPASUR surveillance system - surveillance of space - uses a Doppler shift to detect objects as small as 10cm in diameter at orbital heights of up to 15,000 nautical miles and accurately keep track of them?) They will produce high-resolution and imagery and collect high-resolution, digital terrain mapping data. It will be able to do this day or night and in all weather. But why the development of multiple formation satellite systems?

Since the end of the Cold War the United States has had to refocus its military planning and strategy. Second and Third World countries have quickly increased their technological development. The conflict in the Gulf War had demonstrated the superior reconnaissance ability of surveillance satellites and the US military has depended upon it. The US Air Force believed that space based programs will make ground based and air based radars redundant. To do this there has to be found a cheaper way of producing a new security. In the Draft Roles and Missions Report of the Joints Chief of Staff it notes that;

"The newest national space satellite system will consolidate the missions, facilities and infrastructure of two existing satellites. This will facilitate the closure of six ground stations and consolidate operations at one site, eliminating significant facility expenses."

An important threat is the vulnerability of Low Earth Orbit satellites to anti satellite attack, or ATAS, Satellites(13) can be seen during clear nights but also on rare occasions affordable telescopes can detect faint objects in the daytime sky! (Accompanied by rare atmospheric effects e.g. mirages, we might even have satellites creating daylight UFOs.) It is also relatively easy to track satellites, amateur astronomers have demonstrated this already. Second and Third World countries hoping to develop techniques of countering satellite surveillance only have to find a means of being able to identify, track and either mask ground based targets (such as mobile missile launchers) or disable the satellite itself. It is a misconception that satellites can operate today in a totally covert manner. The technology needed to track and counter/disable is available and inexpensive. There is easy access to a worldwide network of amateur satellite observers, complete with a skymap and a PC anyone can plot and predict the movement of satellites. To detect and track means that the hardware has to be available,

for a technology that is being constantly produced it is easily available if a nation can afford the cost. Most Third World nations can, e.g. India.

A wonderful example is this of a Lacrosse I surveillance satellite over Tehran being targeted for the 16 March 1992 and again on the 22 March 1992. With the knowledge of the satelliteís trajectory, elevation, and height it would have been possible for Iran to fire a missile to knock out the satellite.

Such anti satellite measures are a growing security threat to the US and there is a need for projects to involve formations of satellites so as to prevent any attack on the satellites from rendering their work useless. Another added problem here is that there is a need for a rapid satellite replacement, so that surveillance and intelligence gathering can continue, of which the US has none employed.

My interest in the field of UFOs entails the possible identification of satellites as an origin of the sighting. With this case, I feel that I have done so. I am now aware that certain satellites do travel in formation and they also create different shapes of lights. We have NOSS travelling in threes and also the Lacrosse satellites travelling in twos. For me in Merseyside it also means solving a number of other cases which have been previously labeled as insufficient data (IFO-ID).

However, what I became bothered by was the fact that these satellites had been observed by amateur astronomers in 1996 yet no one in ufology had picked this up! I was unable to locate any of this from the available UFO literature!

This was very unusual as it clearly provides a solution for a number of sightings. I realized that few so called 'ufologists' actually like to hear of solutions, in fact, I know that there are some who enjoy the mere mystery of the subject but refuse to pay attention to the fact that unsolved cases only represent approximately 1 in 10 of reported sightings. We know that from the equipment on board these surveillance satellites, and their appearance, that they will emit a bright white color with a blue tinge, and may be accompanied with smaller lights about their body, the light may also appear to flicker possibly due to the reflector radar antenna as they turn in orbit. The formation of lights will also vary from triangular, to a straight line to even appear to intercept one another and then disappear. This description is not at all definitive but reflects what satellite observers have reported seeing.

The first time I had produced this article I actually thought I was going to receive mail from readers telling me that this was nothing new, how wrong I was! I received confirmation of this from someone who contacted the British UFO Research Association who actually told me that the NOSS satellites actually describe what he had seen in the night sky a few years ago. I wonder how many reported observations from the British public have been interpreted by ufologists as the famed Flying Triangle? I also wonder about NASA film footage, such as STS-80 and STS-48, of objects that appear to be intelligently controlled orbiting the Earth and is interpreted by some to be footage of extra-terrestrial craft rather than, say for argumentís sake, a military project to see if it is possible to shoot down satellites with ground based missiles. Remember that a number of UFO stories put around in the 1960s were cover stories for the CIA when top secret high altitude aircraft were being flown, such as the U2 spyplane. Space footage of apparently unusual and intelligently controlled craft could also be a cover for necessary security satellite operations.

Endnotes

(1) *Guardian* newspaper Thursday June 29 2000, p.9

(2) You can look at this page if you go to its original file name which is CNI: Triangle of Stars?? http://www.cninews.com/Search/CNI.0475.html

(3) http://www.satellite.eu.org/sat/seesat/Aug-1997/0296.html
http://www.satellite.eu.org/sat/seesat/Aug-1997/0299.html
http://www.satellite.eu.org/sat/seesat/Aug-1997/0303.html

(4)http://www.fas.org/spp/military/program/surveill/noss.htm

(5) Another factor to consider is the development of stealth technology and the need to detect this, particularly if possible aggressor nations were to use this technology against the US.

(6) These places are where Classic Wizard, the satellite control system, is located.

(7)http://users.ox.ac.uk/~daveh/Space/Military/mil_sbwass.html
(8)http://www.fas.org/spp/military/program/surveill/

noss_andronov.h tm

(9) *UFO Magazine (UK)* March/ April 2000 p.34 *The Experiencers*

(10) Vandenberg Launch Site is situated in California, USA, and was first used as a training base for soldiers who went to Korea. Then it reopened as an ICBM base in November 1956. In 1958 Vandenberg launched its first missile. The base was selected as a launch site specifically for setting satellites into polar orbit and for missile testing across the Pacific and Kwajalein Atoll. Http://www.rocketry.com/mwade/sites/vannberg.htm

(11) Mark Wadeis Encyclopedia Astronautica http://www.rocketry.com/mwade/craft/noss.htm

(12)http://users.ox.ac.uk/~daveh/Space/Military/mil_sbwass.html

(13) Allen Thomson Space Policy 11 (1) February 1995, pp.19-30 *Satellite Vulnerability: a post-Cold War issue*?

'ALIEN' MESSAGE TESTS HUMAN DECODERS

(Will Knight, New Scientist 08 January 02)

A message that will be broadcast into space later in 2002 has been released to scientists worldwide, to test that it can be decoded easily. The researchers who devised the message eventually hope to design a system that could automatically decode an alien reply.

Unlike previous interstellar broadcasts, the new message is designed to withstand significant interference and interruption during transmission.

"People have tried sending messages in the past, but have not accounted for noise," says Yvan Dutil, who currently works for a Canadian telecommunications company, but developed the message as a private project with Stephane Dumas, who works at the Defence Research Establishment Atlantic in Canada.

If new message had been based on language, it would be impossible for an alien intelligence to decode it. So, instead, a two-dimensional image was converted into a binary string of ones and zeros. These can then easily be transmitted as a radio or laser signal.

"Currently, most resources are focused on signal detection, and not message composition or decoding," says Brian McConnel, author of Beyond Contact: A Guide to SETI and Communicating with Alien Civilisations. "I think it is important to research the latter because the worst-case scenario would be positive confirmation of an ET signal that nobody can comprehend."

The image has not been revealed to those playing the role of alien decoders and about 10 per cent meaningless noise has been added to the data. Some parts have even been deleted. This degradation of the message is intended to simulate the interference that might be experienced during transmission to distant planets.

Dutil says that the binary string is designed to provide clues that should make it decipherable even with such significant disruption.

The sensitivity of interplanetary communications was demonstrated in 1999 when a previous message written by Dutil and Dumas was found to contain an error that could have seriously confused an alien recipient if it had not been corrected in the nick of time

.

The pair have an even grander plan for the future - to develop a software system that can automatically decode alien messages, regardless of excess noise.

A number of telescopes around the world are used to search for patterns in the radio waves that reach Earth. Dutil says that if a message were identified, it might be possible to decode it using an automated system based on well-developed techniques used in cryptanalysis, as well as principles of linguistic and statistical analysis.

However, Douglas Vakoch, head of the Interstellar Message Group at the SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) Institute in California, says that deciphering a reply may prove very tricky.

"Our biggest challenge will be to keep open to new types of messages that we had not previously considered," he says. "That's why the SETI Institute is sponsoring a series of workshops on interstellar message composition, aimed at identifying radically new ways of constructing messages."

The new message can be downloaded from the project homepage. Dutil and Dumas hope that it will be transmitted by laser as early as February 2002, by Celestis, a US company specialising in space projects.

THE *NEW* BRITISH ROSWELL?

By Tom Bolloxinski

Everyone has heard about the so-called UFO "crash" at Roswell, New Mexico back in '47 – *the* most famous crash /retrieval of all time, and for many years, *the* Holy Grail of the crashed alien spacecraft brigade. However, despite the hard work put in by researchers such as Kevin Randle and Stanton Friedman, we now know – according to the U.S. Air Force anyway - that this was actually nothing more unusual than sentient crash-test dummies transporting an atomic bomb from Roswell Field to Washington DC -in a Top Secret Mogul Balloon. Which crashed.[1]

So for many, the Crash / Retrieval hypothesis died a painful death...until now! For it is my great pleasure to reveal to you all that there has indeed been a crash /retrieval of an alien spaceship and it's occupants – but it did not occur in Roswell, Aztec, Kecksburg, Shag Harbour, or the Berwyn Mountains...but right here, in little ol' England, only a few miles from London!

I first heard about this incredible case last year, when I was on a prestigious lecture tour of the UK. I appeared at a Quest Conference, a BUFORA bash, and at the Christmas YUFOS meeting. However, it was after the BUFORA gig that I was approached by a nervous man who I had noticed sitting by himself at the back of the room. He introduced himself only as "Dennis", and said that he had evidence that would "shock the world", if I only dared listen to him.

He told me that a few years ago, he had been working "in an undisclosed position" at Rudloe Manor, and had been an integral part of an earth-shattering Ultra-Top-Secret Military Operation. Although he refused to offer any proof of his identity, status, or any credentials whatsoever, he did give me a damning and convincing piece of evidence to support his wild story.

He handed me a padded envelope, which had been sealed with electrician's tape, stapled, glued, and tied with string. He told me to open the envelope, and the three sealed envelopes inside it when I returned home and was completely alone, and if I was interested by what I saw, to contact him on the number written on the back. Then he hurried away into the night.

I rushed to my hotel as fast as I could and carefully opened the envelopes. Inside was a single glossy photograph...but it was a photo which would change my life. For it revealed nothing less than an autopsy –in progress- of an alien being, a star-creature, an extra-terrestrial biological entity! And it wasn't a piece of crap like that other one you've all seen.

I had to find out more, and the next day, after calling "Dennis" on his mobile phone, we arranged to meet in "a public place", a café close to my hotel. There, sitting at a table in the corner where we could see the door and all who came in – just in case any Black Ops goons tried to silence us -"Dennis" revealed to me his incredible story.

According to my insider, the corpse pictured was one of four discovered scattered outside a strange dome-like craft which had apparently crashed in a field near London. The spacecraft had collided with the ground with such force that it had embedded itself beneath the ground, actually appearing like a grass-covered hillock. But with windows. Oh, and a door. Or maybe it had some kind of 'camouflage' ability that...anyway.

"Debris was scattered all around the rolling hills and trees." 'Dennis' reported. "Some of this debris, or wreckage, looked like long-necked telephones, very thin fabric like bed-sized sheets of tinfoil, and things like windmills."

Tragically, the crash-site appeared to have been in the middle of a huge warren, as there were dozens of dead rabbits everywhere. "It was like *Watership Down* meets *The Wild Bunch*." 'Dennis' said.

Outside the 'craft' were four corpses, of varying sizes, ranging from around four feet to five and a half feet tall. They were humanoid in shape, with large, round heads, huge eyes, slit-like mouths, small nub-like noses, and large ears. The skulls were supported by thin necks, and all had fat, pear-shaped bodies. Although they were obviously of the same species, they were each remarkably individual,

[1] *Probably with some monkeys on board.*

with radically different skin colour. Instead of the grey pallor reported in cases of so-called 'alien abduction', these creatures were red, purple, yellow and – amusingly – green. The crown of each alien's skull terminated in a curious protuberance, or antenna, each one individual also. Whether this, and the skin colour denoted sub-species, rank, or sex, Dennis never found out. "Although the purple one was a bit – odd. I think he was a bit- you know...queer." He postulated.

Each of the creatures was found close to an artefact of some kind: a spherical device, a two-wheeled transportation vehicle, a squarish, brimmed helmet, (perhaps a mind accentuator, or something) and what boffins surmised was a sealed diplomatic pouch; "Although to me, it looked like a hand-bag!" Dennis said with a smile.

There was talk that within the spacecraft, a mechanoid creature was discovered, "like a cross between a vacuum cleaner and a humvee" and this was transported to RAF Kinloss for investigation. It was designated 'Non Organic Object, No Obvious Origin', and given the acronym 'N.O.O.-N.O.O.' Dennis had no idea what became of the robot, but rumour had it that it was back engineered and that Dyson were involved somewhere down the line.

It was only as the aliens were being loaded into specialised body-bags that it was noticed that one of the creatures was still alive!

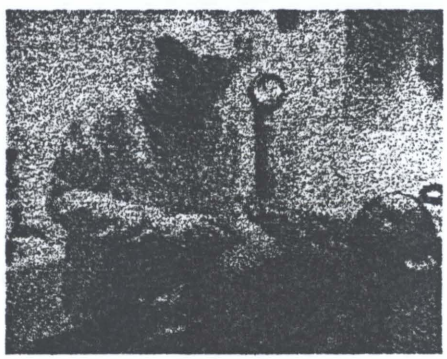
It was taken to the underground base beneath Rudloe Manor, where it survived for some time and became a "guest" of the British Government. It was unable to eat any of our own foods –even strawberry ice-cream- and instead ingested the strange, syrupy yellow substance produced by the intact 'nourishment dispenser' found aboard the spacecraft, and the round, brown roasted-bread like 'cakes'. These tablets of what the scientists termed "toast" were inscribed with an alien symbol : 0 0

although nobody – even top linguistic experts- could understand what it meant.

There appeared to be numerous attempts by other aliens, probably it's superiors on it's home-world, to contact it via a biologically-implanted tele-communications device secreted behind a greyish flap of skin in the creature's stomach. These transmissions would begin by the fleshy protuberance atop the creature's skull emitting an eerie phosphorescence. Then, the mecha-organic 'screen' in the torso would light up as digital video would appear. The Military's top code-breakers were called in to try to decipher the extra-terrestrial messages, which were believed to be hidden –perhaps "piggy-backed", within transmissions of a cheesy skiffle group singing jazzed-up nursery-rhymes in the middle of a field, with 'children' (possibly hybrids) dancing maniacally around. At this the alien would become very excited, and at the end of each transmission would utter it's only – obviously alien – word up to that time, "Eg'N, Eg'N", and the bizarre sequence would be repeated until the alien was satiated.

There were few attempts by the creature to communicate with it's captors, although it is believed that it's attempts may have been mis-interpreted, and not recognised as communications. "Sometimes, the creature would 'dance' around it's chamber, repeating the sequence a number of times. Some of the scientists theorised that the alien may have been attempting to communicate in much the same way as a bee "speaks" to other bees and directions them to flowers.

"I don't know about that," Dennis said, "But it sure was funny. His big fat arse jigging about like that...heheheh."



Dennis became visibly upset when talking about the creature's demise. "One day he just fell over," he said, "For no reason at all. As it 'breathed' it's last, it spoke only the second word we had ever heard...'*uuhh-oooohhhh!*', and that was it. The little guy croaked."

When asked what the boffins did with their little alien guest, who they had spent so many weeks with, Dennis brightened a little bit. "Oh they cut it to bits and put it into lots of little bottles."

UFO COVER-UP REVEALED

By Stephen Biscoe (Yorkshire Post, 4 January 2002)

The British Government had its own version of the X-Files, and for decades denied the fact. Only through the dogged perseverance of a Yorkshire researcher did they eventually come to light, as reports.

At the height of the Cold War, UFO fever was so rampant in the UK that the Ministry of Defence set up a secret working party to try to establish if Earth really was under observation by visiting aliens.

It involved experts from the Directorate of Scientific Intelligence and the Joint Technical Intelligence Committee, and eventually they produced a report. Then the MoD spent the next 49 years denying it ever existed.

Yesterday, the Public Record Office (PRO) made the papers public, but only after their existence had been admitted to a local government Press officer.

Had it not been for Dr David Clarke,it is unlikely that they would have come to light.

Clarke combines his local government job with an academic career which has made him one of the country's leading folklore experts.

A researcher at the National Centre for English Cultural Tradition at Sheffield University, he is the author of several books on a range of folkloric traditions.

His latest book *Out of the Shadows*, to be published in May by Piatkus, draws on the two years of research he has been carrying out for a post-doctoral study.

In the course of it, he came across references in official government documents to the report of the secret working party set up on Churchill's orders in 1950 to investigate reports of UFO sightings.

In 1980, the 30-year rule ended its term of confidentiality- but the rule was ignored and it remained secret. Clarke says, in fact, that he was repeatedly told by the MoD that no such report existed; it even denied the existence of the working party. Yet the Sheffield researcher was still coming across references to both.

He was being lied to - and so was Parliament. In 1955 and again in 1962, the Yorkshire Conservative MP Major Sir Patrick Wall asked questions in the House about the report, and each time was told that there had been no formal study.

Those who knew otherwise might have thought it contained such startling data that the Government dared not risk causing panic by making it public.

Clarke was certainly so intrigued that he kept up his pesterings until eventually, in May last year, the MoD actually admitted that the report did exist – and furthermore, allowed him see it.

What he read astounded him because nothing in it even hinted that the researchers believed in an extra-terrestrial invasion. Indeed, the authors dismissed the claims of UFO sightings as "optical illusions and psychological delusions" - or just plain hoaxes.

They wrote: "We consider that no progress will be made by attempting further investigation of unco-ordinated and subjective evidence, and that positive results could only be obtained by organising throughout the country, or the world, continuous observation of the skies by a co-ordinated network of visual observers, equipped with photographic apparatus, and supplemented by a network of radar stations and sound locators."

They concluded: "We should regard this, on the evidence so far available, as a singularly profitless enterprise. We accordingly recommend very strongly that no further investigation of reported mysterious aerial phenomena be undertaken, unless and until some material evidence becomes available."

One of the cases they examined involved Flight Lieutenant Stan Hubbard from York who, in 1950, described having seen, on two different occasions, "a flat disc, light pearl grey in colour, about 50 feet in diameter" flying low over the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough at speeds of 800mph to 1,000mph.
The authors of the report said: "We find it impossible to believe that a most unconventional aircraft, of exceptional speed,

could have travelled at no great altitude, in the middle of a fine summer morning, over a populous and air-minded district like Farnborough, without attracting the attention of more than one observer."

Hubbard did not know about this conclusion until Dave Clarke tracked him down to his home in Virginia and sent him a copy of the report. He reacted angrily to its dismissive tone. Hubbard said that at the second sighting, a few weeks later, he was with five other test pilots on the roof of the control tower waiting for one of their colleagues to make a landing - and all of them saw it.

One of the five was Wing Commander Frank Jolliffe, and Clarke has spoken to him, too. Jolliffe said he was interviewed by MoD agents who appeared to be taking his account seriously - and until he saw the report, he had gone on assuming that that had been the case.

After the MoD allowed Clarke to see the report last May, it was sent to the Public Record Office which released it on Wednesday along with the 1901 Census and other once-confidential documents.

Clarke says: "The fact that it has taken half a century for these papers to come to light shows how keen the MoD have been to conceal their interest in the subject of UFOs.

"Rather than coming clean at the time, they decided to keep the contents of this report secret, which has given rise to all the claims of Government cover-ups and conspiracies that lie behind the X-Files mythology.

"What they were covering up was not knowledge of alien visitors, but simply the fact that they did not have any real answers.

"At that time, at the height of the Cold War, flying saucers could have been Russian aircraft or missiles and so a policy of silence was thought to be the safest policy.

"These papers show there was a cover-up, but it was a cover-up of ignorance not of any secret knowledge."

'PANTHER' SIGHTING IN GARDEN

(Evening Echo, January 10, 2002)

An animal lover got more than he bargained for when he left tempting morsels out for wildlife . . . and spotted a panther-like cat in his garden.

Alerted by a security light, Michael Lefevre, of Richmond Avenue, Shoebury, scanned his patio for intruders and was astonished to see two "piercing emerald green eyes" looking straight at him.

Mr Lefevre, 49, is convinced they belonged to a panther, which had eaten the chicken and rice scraps he had left out earlier.

The retired plasterer said: "The sensor light went on twice and when it went on again I crept up to the patio door. To my amazement there was a 5ft long cat with crystal-clear emerald-green eyes eating the food.

"I backed away and it sped off down the garden. I heard a crash and called my wife."

The startled couple called the RSPCA and police but had a hard time convincing anyone.

Mr Lefevre added: "The police just took the mickey. They said it must have been a fox, but I know a fox when I see one and they aren't black and two-and-a-half feet tall."

Despite their scepticism, police did respond to Mr Lefevre's call.

A spokeswoman said: "In the early hours of January 7 police were notified of a sighting of a large black cat in Richmond Avenue. Police officers visited the house the same day and inspected the scene of the sighting. Other than food being missing from a box there was no other physical evidence and as there is no other information to go on we cannot comment further on the matter."

However, Mr Lefevre insists his fence has been damaged and that there are four indentations in gravel at the end of his garden.

An RSPCA spokeswoman said: "This isn't something we would become involved in unless an animal was injured."

FROM AROUND THE WORLD...AND BEYOND!!!

UFOs, conspiracies, fortean and paranormal events compiled by Dave Baker

SECURITY GUARDS FOR 'NOWHERE' STRIKE FOR CONTRACT, HIGHER PAY

(Keith Rogers The Las Vegas Review-Journal December 11, 2001)

A group of 70 security guards known as the "camo dudes" walked off their jobs Monday in Las Vegas and at the covert military installation known as Area 51, a place they said they can't talk about.

"Use your imagination," union President Vernell Hall said when asked where he worked as he and more than a dozen other striking security officers displayed "On Strike" signs on Haven Street near McCarran International Airport.

That is where nondescript passenger jets, known as Janet planes, routinely take the guards and other workers to the installation on the dry bed of Groom Lake, 90 miles north of Las Vegas, a place they referred to only as "nowhere" and "out of town."

Hall, leader of the Security Police Association of Nevada, an in-house collective bargaining unit, said the association's members decided to go on strike after three months of negotiations for a new contract with their employer, EG&G Technical Services Inc., ended in a stalemate.

Hall said the issues include lack of adequate wages and benefits.

"There's been too much overtime since Sept. 11. Overtime on top of overtime," Hall said.

Greg Rentchler, security manager for EG&G, confirmed that about 70 guards went on strike early Monday at the company's Grier Drive offices and at "remote locations."

"They work at remote test locations. They support the Nellis (Air Force) ranges," Rentchler said.

"We have a close relationship with these guys, and they are in negotiations as we speak," he said.

Rentchler said supervisors are manning the posts vacated by the striking guards.

He said the guards previously held a contract with another company, EG&G Special Projects, until a new one was signed in 1996 with EG&G Technical Services Inc. He said EG&G Technical Services Inc. holds a contract with the federal government to provide services for the Department of Defense, including a security guard force.

Although Rentchler would not give details about his reference to "remote locations," a source familiar with the guard force said last week that the guards would strike at 3 a.m. Monday. The source said many of the guards had been assigned to Area 51, the much-publicized, 38,400-acre Groom Lake installation where high-tech U.S. aircraft are tested.

It is the same place where former workers at the installation have charged that coatings for radar-evading stealth fighter jets were burned in open trenches, sending toxic clouds into the air that made them ill.

Glenn Campbell, who operates the Internet bookstore *Aliens on Earth* and formerly directed an Area 51 watchdog group, said he received an anonymous call Monday from a man who said "the camo dudes are on strike."

Campbell often has referred to the guards as "camo dudes" because of the camouflaged uniforms they wear while patrolling places where public lands border restricted areas around the Groom Lake installation.

While pickets paraded outside the ramp for Janet planes at McCarran, another group sat in lawn chairs outside EG&G Technical Services offices a few miles away on Grier Drive. One striking security officer at that location, Bill Hull, said he wants "fair and equitable treatment from our company."

A 17-year employee, Hull said he hasn't received a pay raise in "14 or 15 years" and said he lost at least 25 percent of his pay when the contract was switched to EG&G Technical Services in 1996.

Hull, wearing a baseball cap emblazoned with a U.S. flag flanked by two alien-face pins, said he is paid $15.05 per hour but should be making at least $16.03 per hour.

He said the guards work 12-hour shifts, staying four days "out of town," before flying back to Las Vegas and getting three days off.

"We don't get break periods," he said.

TWILIGHT ZONE: A PLACE WHERE CARS GO DEAD

(Fort Worth Star-Telegram Dec. 31, 2001)

KELLER, Texas - As far as anyone can tell, there are no little green beings hiding in this city just north of Fort Worth. Nor are there mysterious spinning spacecraft. But something strange is afoot.

Just ask resident Amy Johnson.

She and friend Jodi Johnson have encountered the same problem in the same section of one road in the city. Their vehicles have sputtered and died.

As far as the two can tell, there are two common factors: They both drive Isuzu sport utility vehicles, and they both pass a large white ball perched atop a small building along the road.

The ball has such a dramatic effect on their vehicles that the two women avoid the road even though it is the shortest way home, they say.

Amy Johnson turned to brothers Tom and Ray Magliozzi, who, under the pseudonyms Click and Clack, host *Car Talk*, a popular talk show on National Public Radio that deals with automobiles.

"If I drive on the side of the street that the ball is, the car completely dies. You just coast on through and have to steer your way off the road," she lamented to the Magliozzis. When she drives on the side of the road away from the white sphere, her lights flicker, Johnson said.

The Magliozzis' initial response: "Is there a sign that says 'Area 51'?"

There is a sign, but it says "FAA." The ball is a powerful radar device covered with a white dome. It is part of the Federal Aviation Administration's Air Route Surveillance Radar system, and it tracks airplanes flying to or from Dallas/Fort Worth Airport. FAA officials who are knowledgeable about the radar could not be reached for comment.

Isuzu officials said strong radio signals generated by the radar cause engines in some Isuzus to skip a beat. The situation is unusual, but it has occurred before, Isuzu spokesman Chip Letzkus said.

"Sometimes it happens near military bases. Sometimes it happens near airports," he said. "It's a very rare problem."

Waves from the radar interfere with signals sent from a component in the vehicle's engine to a computer that operates the engine, Letzkus said. The signals tell the engine how fast the vehicle is going, and the computer adjusts accordingly. When the signals are disrupted, the engine stalls.

Each vehicle needs a shield that protects the sensor from interference, Letzkus said. Isuzu, which recognized the problem after 1997, will install the shield for free, he said. The company has begun adding the shield as a standard engine part, but it has taken awhile for all Isuzu plants to include the protective part.

"There is nothing sinister going on here," Letzkus said. "It's not difficult to fix."

After learning about Amy Johnson's problem, Click and Clack suggested that she dress in Army fatigues and penetrate the radar's defenses in an attempt to see what the government is up to. They then suggested an experiment: Wrap the front fender in tinfoil to repel the waves.

A thoughtful suggestion, Jodi Johnson said, but not quite what she had in mind.

"Like I'm going to drive every morning with tinfoil on my car," she said. "That's just not a solution we're looking for."

Amy Johnson's seven-minute segment on Car Talk generated dozens of e-mail messages offering solutions to the problem and speculation about the white orb.

Some suggested renting spacesuits. Others asked, Why stop at the fender, when you can cover the whole vehicle in tinfoil?

"It's really funny," Amy Johnson said. "No men in black have shown up at the house. There's nothing sinister. Just the Isuzu."

Amy Johnson said she is considering reappearing on *Car Talk* for the show's "Stump the Chumps" segment.

SEA MYSTERY: 8 SIGHTINGS OF NEW SQUID

(Margaret Munro,National Post, December 21, 2001)

William Sager was two kilometres beneath the sea when the ghostly figure appeared out of the dark, murky depths.

"I had never seen anything like this creature," says the Texas A&M University scientist.

"It had thin tentacles that stretched six to eight feet, at least, more like 10 times its body length," says Sager, who was in a submersible vehicle searching for oil seepage on the seabed of the Gulf of Mexico.

"Imagine yourself in a place where it's just about freezing, it's pitch black, there is no moon, and there is no light whatsoever. We're tootling along and the sub pilot said: 'Look at that.' "

They videotaped the animal for a few minutes, returned to the surface and started looking for someone who could identify it.

That someone was Michael Vecchione, a biologist who studies squid and octopi at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.

Vecchione has been getting an increasing number of calls about long-tentacled "mystery" creatures. Eight submersible crews have run across the animals in recent years in the dark depths of the Gulf of Mexico, and the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans.

Although no one has yet brought a specimen back to shore, several of the sub crews have returned with video clips that leave little doubt the creature is new to science. So new that the journal Science features a report on the "remarkable" animals today and has posted video clips on its Web site (http://www.eurekalert.org/sci_pub/vecchione-12-21-01.html) of the creatures gracefully swimming through the water.

The discovery speaks volumes about the dearth of knowledge about the oceans that cover almost 70% of Earth. "That such a substantial animal is common in the world's largest ecosystem, yet has not previously been captured or observed is an indication of how little is known about life in the deep ocean," Vecchione and his colleagues write in Science in a report detailing eight recent sighting of the animals.

"We have no idea how much diversity is down there," Vecchione added in an interview. "Our knowledge is so rudimentary that anytime we look we find amazing things."

The squid is one of the most astonishing finds in years, he says. It does not look or act like other squid, which tend to move quickly. Scientists will have to capture the animal before they can identify it. They do know the mystery squid is much slimmer, and much more docile than the fabled and elusive giant squid that are estimated to grow up to 18 metres in length and weigh as much as 900 kilograms.

Vecchione says the animals may be adult members of a recently identified squid family, Magnapinnidae. Juvenile members of the family – which were only a few centimetres long -- have been seen before floating in surface waters. It is possible the young live on the surface and then sink to the bottom as they mature.

The mystery squid reach great depths, judging by where they have been seen. One was almost five kilometres below the surface in the Atlantic Ocean off the Brazilian coast. The others were between two and three-and-a-half kilometres under the ocean.

They are solitary creatures, and appear to be pinkish in colour. And unlike other squid that are normally quick to swim away when startled, these seem almost oblivious to visitors.

"It just hung there, looking at us, as if suddenly seeing [the submersible] ALVIN float up like a whale with lights was no big deal," Sager says. "It was very slow moving, and didn't seem to react."

The gangly tentacles, that can measure up to seven metres in length, also set the animal apart from other squid, says Vecchione. The tentacles are not only thin and long, but they appear to stick to things like glue judging by

the way one of the animals became entangled with a submersible vehicle.

"When it tried to swim away it had trouble letting go, which indicates to me that their arms are really sticky," Vecchione says.

He suspects the creatures use their long tentacles to catch food. "My guess is it eats little crustaceans [shelled sea animals] that bump into its long sticky arms," he says. "But if you ask how they get it from their arms to their mouth I've got to tell, I do not know."

Vecchione believes scientists should be making a concerted effort to explore the deep oceans and catalogue the creatures they contain in order to better understand what lives below the sea.

EDITORIAL- OR THE BIT THAT NO-ONE READS

Every Christmas[2] her Majesty the Queen takes time out from watching foreigners doing funny dances in traditional costumes, and killing assorted animals, to spend a few minutes talking to the nation. *Her* Nation. Taking a leaf out of her book, I'm going to take this time to speak to *you*, my readers, and thank all of those who made it possible for YUFOS to continue for yet another year. The difference is, of course that I am not female, Royal, or on stamps, and there will in all probability be more people reading this than who actually watched the Queen's speech. *Double figures at least!*

Just as she once made her famous –and *quite funny*[3] - 'Anus Horriblus' speech, I'm also going to take the time out for a quick moan.

It's not easy producing a 20-page monthly magazine, hosting 12 meetings, and attempting to promote YUFOS in every way possible, but it *has* been possible with the help of a small number of dedicated, helpful, and in some cases *desperate* people. As always, no-one has received any form of payment for what they do, barring the occasional expenses, and so- all joking aside, I really do appreciate everything these people do.

So endless thanks to:

Jonathan Slater and **Richard Moss** for being the other two of our *Three Amigos*!, and generally helping brainstorm, run, and promote YUFOS in it's entirety from meetings through appearances at The Sheffield Show, other groups, and the rest.

Jon and his Mum, **Brenda**, of *Slater Productions 2001(2),* for kindly sharing their house with two photocopiers big enough to sleep three each, and for churning out the copies of PRB you hold in your maulers every month...for running the *UFO Central* section and inviting various genuine witnesses and assorted nutters (*"...The only flying saucers I've seen is them wot me missus chucks at me!*) to inundate him with e-mails, and for numerous articles throughout the year...

Richard Moss for the creation and upkeep of our website, for creating our posters and hand-outs, tweaking the YUFOS computer, for running me and others all over the place with absolutely no concern for his own petrol, and for all the other bits I've forgotten.

Thanks also to those who have sat in the interviewees chair throughout the year: **Jenny Randles, Clas Svahn, Nick Redfern, Jon Downes, Kevin Randle, Lionel Fanthorpe** and **Tom Bolloxinski...**

Those writers, both professional and amateur, who have contributed articles; **Bill Chalker, Jenny Randles, Richard Hall, David Clarke, Andy Roberts, Adam Bradley, Nick Redfern, Eileen Fletcher, Clas Svahn, Mark Martin, David Percy,** and **Tom Bolloxinski,** to name but a few...

Dave Clarke and **Andy Roberts** for excellent talks at YUFOS meetings...

Bill Booker for his remarkable collection of books and magazines donated to the YUFOS library, including some difficult-to-find classics...

Lindsay & Bill for lending us the display boards for the YUFOS stand at the Sheffield Show...

My wife **Jacqui** for the money-laundering and distribution of 'the merchandise', for living with piles of books, magazines, videos, and files, some of them even about the UFO topic, and other stuff we can't talk about in a family magazine...

My son **Matthew** for beating up Jon, dragging me away from ufology to sometimes live a family life, and for looking after Mummy while Dad's out chasing UFOs...one day, lad, all this will be yours...

And anyone else who has helped with advice, donkey-work, lifts, support, drinks, sexual favours, and getting rid of evidence.

Long may we continue. It's a laugh, if nothing else.

DAVE BAKER -January 2001

[2] *Or in actuality June – sorry to burst the bubble)*

[3] *Well I thought so anyway...*